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WHITCHURCH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL: ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1942.



Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my fifth annual report all of which have been prepared under the restrictions and limitations of war conditions, and as for the previous ones the Minister of Health has directed that the report should be prepared on the same lines, that is that it should be an interim report and confined to essential and urgent matters which have affected the public health during the year, further, figures of population or figures from which local populations can be reconstructed must not be published, so the report must of necessity be deprived of much of its interest and information.

Arrangements are to be made for the preservation of all records which cannot be included in this report.

Your obedient Servant,

L. WILSON EVANS.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

<u>Name.</u>	<u>Qualifications.</u>	<u>Office Held.</u>	<u>Whole or Part time.</u>
L. Wilson Evans.	M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.	Medical Officer of Health.	Part.
M.W. Sowden.	M.I.M. & Cy.E.	Sanitary Ins- pector and Surveyor.	Whole.

STATISTICS OF THE AREA.

Area of District.	5,996 Acres.
No. of inhabited houses according to rate book at end of 1942.	1,899.
Rateable value end of December 1942.	£38,582.
Sum represented by a penny rate 1942-43.	£152.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1942.

Birth Rate.	16.7
Birth Rate England and Wales.	15.8
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 births.	65.
England and Wales.	49.
Still births per 1,000 population	0.27.
Still births England and Wales.	0.54.
Death Rate.	11.7
Death Rate England and Wales.	11.6
Deaths from:-	
Diphtheria.	Nil.
Measles.	Nil.
Whooping Cough.	Nil.
Diarrhoea under 2 years of age.	1.
Maternal Deaths.	Nil.

Other chief causes of death.

Heart Disease.	25.
Intracranial Vascular Lesions.	13.
Cancer.	10.
Pneumonia.	6.
Bronchitis.	6.

As far as the vital statistics are an indication of the state of the health of the district the evidence is favourable. Although the birth rate is higher than that for the Country as a whole it is one of the few areas which does not show an increase, but this is to some extent counterbalanced by a decrease in the deaths and there is a natural increase in the population of 36 as against 43 last year.

The infant mortality rate shows a considerable improvement on the rather high figure of last year, unfortunately it has not maintained the very low figures of 1939-40 and is again a good deal higher than that for the rest of the Country. Three of the infants died within a week of birth and two within a month.

It is satisfactory to note that there have been no deaths from Infectious Disease and for the second year there were no maternal deaths.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

<u>Disease.</u>	<u>No. of Cases.</u>	<u>No. admitted to Hospital.</u>	<u>Deaths.</u>
Cerebrospinal Fever.	-	-	-
Diphtheria.	1	1	-
Enteric Fever.	-	-	-
Erysipelas.	-	-	-
Measles.	44	-	-
Ophthalmia Neonatorum.	2	2	-
Pneumonia	1	-	6
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	1	-
Scarlet Fever.	-	-	-
Whooping Cough.	11	-	-

There was little infectious disease during the year. There was only one case of Diphtheria. Two other cases were admitted to the Isolation Hospital, but one was a carrier and in the other the diagnosis was revised to Tonsillitis.

The measles was a fairly circumscribed outbreak lasting from August to November. It was a mild form and there were no deaths. As the last outbreak had been in 1939 it was rather surprising that there were not more cases and the disease flared up again in the new year to develop into a more extensive outbreak. The notification of one case of pneumonia and the certifying of six deaths would suggest that the doctors of Whitchurch are less successful in diagnosing and treating cases of this disease than is generally the case but the impression is possibly a wrong one due to the doctors forgetting their obligation to notify this disease.

Diphtheria Immunisation.

	<u>Under 5 years.</u>	<u>5-15 years.</u>
Number of children who completed the full course of immunisation between January 1st and Dec. 31st 1942.	121.	186.
Percentage of child population considered to be immunised at Dec. 31st, 1942.	40%	88%

Many fewer children were immunised during the year owing to so large a proportion of the children having already been done but the percentage of children immunised was improved especially among the children under 5 years. In November the County Council took over the responsibility for the immunisation of all children up to school leaving age.

Scabies.

During the first half of the year no cases of Scabies came to the notice of the Health Department but from July 27 cases were dealt with and several of these had recurrent attacks. These 27 cases were in 15 houses, six of them were evacuated children, five of whom were treated in the Sick Bay.

Scabies is not a notifiable disease and cases are generally discovered through the schools and welfare centres. Cases are investigated by the Sanitary Inspector and measures taken to control the spread of the disease are the recognition of all cases in a house, their consequent treatment and also that of contacts.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Respiratory.

Non-respiratory.

New Cases.				Admitted to Sanatorium.		Deaths.		New Cases.				Deaths.	
M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	2	1		
								Transfer from other districts.					
								1					
2				1		-		9				3	

The increase in Pulmonary Tuberculosis which has been noted in the Country as a whole during the years of the War is fortunately not evident in Whitchurch. The numbers notified during the last two years were very low. The same cannot be said of non-pulmonary tuberculosis which has shown a considerable increase in recent years and last year was the highest recorded. There is one source of infection which causes a proportion of cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis but does not cause pulmonary tuberculosis to any extent and that is milk and the failure of this form of the disease to show a decrease as in the case of Pulmonary Tuberculosis suggests that factors such as improved standards of living which would account for the reduction of the Pulmonary Form are not operative to the same extent in the non-pulmonary form and that measures taken to make milk safe have not been sufficiently comprehensive to attain that object, and if a reduction of bovine tuberculosis with other milk borne disease is to be achieved there appears to be no other practical solution at hand but pasteurisation.

During the year, following on the report of the Committee dealing with "Tuberculosis in War Time" the Minister of Health has brought forward measures to attack Pulmonary Tuberculosis. Two of the most important of these is the use of mass miniature X-rays which

will enable many cases of the disease to be discovered in the early stages and so greatly increase the chance of cure and prevent cases getting to the infectious stage, and the financial allowances to cases of pulmonary tuberculosis under treatment and their dependants. This by enabling many patients to give up work and undergo treatment who would otherwise carry on until the chance of recovery was seriously jeopardised, and by relieving patients of anxiety as to the wellbeing of their families by providing them with proper food and clothing and thus reducing the risk of them falling victims to the disease are momentous steps towards the eradication and destruction of a disease which above all is the scourge of young people.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

Sanitary Circumstances of the area.

Water Supply.

There was a decreased average daily consumption of 29,414 gallons. There has been no shortage of water or failure of supplies during the year. To obtain economy in the use of water, the public have been requested to avoid undue waste, and inspections have been made regularly to detect any leakage or waste. The supply is continually chlorinated by injecting at the waterworks a sufficient amount of chlorine into the pumping main to the Town. A contract has been entered into with the makers of the chlorination plant for the maintenance of the apparatus in a satisfactory condition. No new water mains have been laid during the year.

Rainfall. The rainfall as recorded at Fenns Bank for the year 1942 was 25.55 inches as compared with 21.29 inches for the previous year an increase of 4.26 inches. The average yearly rainfall recorded for the past 34 years is 28.38 inches.

Drainage and Sewerage.

No new sewers have been laid during the year. Various repairs, etc., to drains on private property have been carried out during the year by the owners concerned on the serving of preliminary notices.

Smoke Abatement.

Complaints have been received from time to time regarding the emission of black smoke from one industrial premises, and upon notices being served on the owners, the nuisance was abated. The inferior quality of the fuel now obtainable may influence the matter to some extent.

Schools.

The schools, including those premises taken as emergency schools for evacuation purposes, have been regularly inspected, and found satisfactory.

Lodging Houses.

The two registered Lodging Houses have been frequently inspected and found to be satisfactory and well conducted.

Eradication of Bed Bugs.

No nuisances have been found in this respect during the year.

Closet Accommodation.

The closet accommodation in the district remains the same as for the year 1941.

Scavenging.

The scavenging of house refuse has been carried out satisfactorily during the year and the refuse collected has been deposited on the Council's tips.

The salvage of bottles, scrap iron, bones, rags, etc., and the collection of waste paper and kitchen waste has been proceeded with during the year, and a large quantity disposed of to the various dealers. The usual salvage drives and appeals were held throughout the County on various occasions and brought good results.

Housing.

No new houses have been erected by the Council during the year, and the number of houses now owned by the Council remains the same, namely 266.

No new houses have been erected by private enterprise during the year.

Housing (Rural Workers) Acts, 1926 and 1938.

No schemes have been carried out under these acts during the year. The number of houses dealt with under the Acts therefore still remains at 7.

Housing Standard.

The housing standard of the district has been maintained during the whole year regardless of changed conditions, and no great difficulty has been obtained in having any repairs required to dwellings executed, after the serving of a preliminary notice.

Overcrowding.

Number of cases of overcrowding. 2.

The two cases of overcrowding were caused in both instances by taking in lodgers, but upon preliminary notices being served, the nuisances were abated.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Milk Supply.

All the farms and dairies within the district are frequently inspected and any defects found including lighting, ventilation, drainage, cleanliness or structural conditions are conveyed to the milk producers either verbally or by notices with a view to having them remedied.

Number of Tuberculin Tested (Certified) Milk
sellers in District at end of year. 1.

Number of Tuberculin Tested Milk sellers
in District at the end of year. 1.

Number of producers of undesignated milk on the register. 32.

Number of inspections made. 73.

Number of defects found. Nil.

Number of preliminary notices served. Nil.

Number of producers of accredited milk
(Wholesalers, 18 Retailers 2) 20.

Number of inspections. 45.
Number of samples of milk which failed to comply with conditions
(according to copies of analysis forwarded by the Public Health
Department, Salop County Council). 17.

The quality of the milk has been good throughout the year, and the cowsheds and dairies have been kept in a good and clean condition.
Meat and other foods.

Meat. The two slaughterhouses used by the Ministry of Food in connection with centralised slaughtering are inspected regularly and all carcasses found defective in any way are condemned and disposed of as necessary.

A scheme has been entered into with the surrounding Urban and Rural Districts served by the Slaughterhouse for combined meat inspection by the inspectors of the respective districts on the various days of the week when killing is in progress.

Bakehouses.

The eleven registered bakehouses within the district have been frequently inspected during the year and have been found to be in a clean sanitary condition, with satisfactory ventilation and lighting.

Other places Where food is prepared, and shops, etc.

Inspections of these premises are regularly made.

Adulteration, etc.

The premises licensed for the manufacture and sale of preserved food under the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, have in each case been inspected and found to be in a satisfactory condition.

Inspection of tinned food has been carried out and the necessary condemnation notes have been issued where any food has been found unfit for human consumption.

Scabies Order, 1941.

The necessary inspections in connection with outbreaks of Scabies have been carried out during the year.